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**How Students Organize Their Time**

With twenty-four hours in a day, the scheduling possibilities for college students seem endless. Once the student enters sleep into the equation they lose about six to ten hours of their day. Then, the student must calculate the time spent in class, clubs, organizations, sports teams, studying, socializing, and more. With this great amount of time consuming activities, how do the students fit all these activities into one twenty-four hour day and still balance their social and academic lifestyle? After reading some of Nathan’s (2005) *My Freshman Year*, taking time diaries of students, interviewing students, and looking at my own busy schedule I have come to understand the ways students at Bloomsburg University schedule their busy lives.

Rebekah Nathan, a professor at AnyU, could not understand her students; she did not understand why some came to class in their pajamas or why some had no interest in taking her class seriously. So, Nathan enrolled in her college as an undergraduate student to study the college culture. While living with the students, attending classes with students, and observing their habits Nathan got an idea of what student’s schedules looked like. Statistics reported in Nathan’s study showed that, “Sixty percent of seniors nationwide and, 53 percent of freshman, said they socialized between one and ten hours per week, decidedly less than two hours per day” (33). These statistics show that students do spend a lot of time doing activities other than socializing. Nathan’s students focused most of their time on their jobs, “According to my local sample, students were first and foremost working jobs, both inside and outside of the university” (33). Other students in Nathan’s sample participated in clubs or organizations that took up a good amount of their time, “…my interviews with students about their extracurricular participation showed that about half of those in my sample were involved in professional clubs and volunteer work” (34). Nathan’s study helps show how students spend their time and, somewhat, describes how students choose to schedule their time.

To study the lives of students on campus, like Rebekah Nathan, I asked multiple students to give me a descriptive account of one entire day. This way, I could get a first-hand look at the lives of students. Many students gave me their class schedules first then tended to fill in the times in between. After they mentioned their class schedule, students would give me the times of meetings they had for clubs on campus. After clubs came the organizations or sports teams the students were involved in. One student’s day was so busy I could not imagine how she got so much done.

“I have class at 10:00am, 11:00am, and 12:00pm then I usually go to the gym until 1:30pm then the library until I have class again at 3:30pm until 4:45pm. I got back to my apartment around 5:00pm to eat dinner and get some studying done. I have a meeting for a sports team at 7:00pm and then a meeting for my organization at 9:00pm. I should get home around 10:30pm. I’ll do some more homework and reading for classes. I might have some time to watch a little television with my roommate but I usually do homework during. I usually go to bed around 12:00am” (Student; 2011).

Other students who gave me their time diaries expressed having more free time on days when they did not have many classes or class at all, “I don’t have classes on Fridays so I can sleep in and relax. I sometimes have practice at 6:00 but no one really goes on Fridays. I usually spend the day catching up on class work” (Student; 2011). From the time diaries, I noticed that many students plan their days around their classes and then find time to fit in extracurricular activities and their social life.

From the interviews I conducted with students with similar schedules to me and schedules that differed from me, I saw the same theme; all of the students noted that their school schedules dictated the rest of their schedules. One of the students I play water polo with mentioned that coming to every practice can offer a challenge. Sometimes, students cannot make it to their sports practices, club meetings, or organization gatherings because they have class that goes until 9:00pm or 9:30pm. In these cases, the student is putting their class schedule first and fitting the rest of their plans around it. One student who I interviewed about their schedule said, “School and classes come first but after that I have my job and I have to work. So, after my school priorities, I have my work priorities and if there’s time left over after that I’ll be social” (Student; 2011). From interviewing students I noticed how much time they put into their classes and how little time some have for other activities. And yet, Some students find themselves so busy with class, clubs, sports, organizations, jobs, and relationships; it’s amazing that they can find a way to balance their time and accomplish all their goals.

In my own experience, I put my classes and my class work first. After my class work, I focus on sociological research that I have conducted and that I will be presenting at a conference next month. For the conference, I have multiple meetings a week with a professor and other students presenting at the conference. Once I get all that work done or mostly done, I go to water polo practice four nights a week from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. Once a week I have meetings for my sorority from 9:00pm to 10:00pm. I also participate in the sociology club which meets once every two weeks. Thursday nights my sorority has social mixers from about 10:30pm to 1:30am. In between all these meetings and class work I like to find time to spend with my friends and my roommates. So, personally, I schedule my time around my class schedules first, then activities involved with school second, and my social life last.

In conclusion, from Rebekah Nathan’s My Freshman Year, the time diaries and interviews conducted, and my own experience, I have discovered that a college student’s class schedule often determines how they spend time outside of class. Nathan’s research showed how the students she studied spent their time and about how much time they spent doing each activity. The time diaries I took allowed me to break down how certain students spend their day and what they found most important. The interview allowed me to ask more questions about the student’s schedule and get their personal opinion on how they planned their days. Finally, my own busy schedule allowed me to realize how students, including myself, organized each day. To say twenty-four hours in a day is not enough is an understatement. With classes, clubs, organizations, and work students barely have enough time to have a social life and then trying to add sleep into the day is nearly impossible. With so little time, how do students choose which clubs and organizations to join? Does class schedule, comfort, or interests determine what a student does in their free time?

**References**

Nathan, R (2005). *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. New York: Penguin Group, Lt.

Time diaries from multiple Bloomsburg Students

Interviews from multiple Bloomsburg Students.

My own personal experience.